

AMENDMENTS IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method of etching a specimen, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) providing an ion beam gun with a grid having a surface with a plurality of holes extending therethrough for filtering a ion beam emitted by the gun;
 - (b) supporting the specimen adjacent to the gun and rotating one of the specimen and the gun relative to the other;
 - (c) emitting an ion beam from the gun through the grid and toward the specimen; and
 - (d) blocking at least some of the holes in the grid by covering a radial swath of the grid from a center of the grid to a perimeter of the grid such that the ion beam emitted by the gun is prevented from passing therethrough for improving an etch depth uniformity of the specimen.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises mounting a plate to the surface of the grid to block said at least some of the holes.
3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises blocking approximately 1 to 5% of the holes in the grid.
4. (canceled)
5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (b) comprises rotating the specimen relative to the gun.